I am the 2nd generation in our business. I have 2 sons that work with me that are 3rd generation. Since 2000, we have invested over 20 million dollars consolidating distributorships in Butte and Missoula and purchasing equipment, and renovating warehouses.

We employ 130 people with a payroll well over 4 million dollars annually. My people are the beneficiaries of a good health care plan and a 401k plan. We have invested all this into a business on the reliance or the assumption, that our regulatory system would stay the same. It would be unfair to change the system so quickly. But if change happens, it should be done incrementally and in small steps. My fear about the change that HB616 will bring are the potential unintended consequences. Like the consequences that we face today from legislation passed in 1999 and the reasons that the MTA brought forth this bill.

I have talked to some people in the industry about the "what if's", and they say that the "what if's" won't happen. But I am from Butte, and I remember when 1,200 men worked at a smelter in Anaconda. They were warned to end a strike or have the smelter close. I remember their reply, "that could never happen."

DaleMarkovich Summit Beverage Butte, Missoula